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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/786,657	02/25/2004	Warren P. Williamson IV	ARB-9017.1	2854
23410	7590	11/28/2008	EXAMINER	
Vista IP Law Group LLP			WOO, JULIAN W	
2040 MAIN STREET, 9TH FLOOR				
IRVINE, CA 92614			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3773	
			MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			11/28/2008	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/786,657	WILLIAMSON ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Julian W. Woo	3773

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 September 2008.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1,5,7,8,21-31,74 and 75 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1, 5, 7, 8, 21-31, 74, and 75 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ . |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ . |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on September 15, 2008 has been entered.

Terminal Disclaimer

2. The terminal disclaimer filed on September 15, 2008 disclaiming the terminal portion of any patent granted on this application which would extend beyond the expiration date of U.S. Patent Nos. 5,972,004 and 6,162,233 has been reviewed and is accepted. The terminal disclaimer has been recorded.

Claim Objections

3. Claims 74 and 75 are objected to because of the following informality: The status identifier (e.g., --(new)--) was not given for each of these claims. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

Art Unit: 3773

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 21-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Pyka et al. (5,002,563). Pyka et al. disclose, at least in figures 3-5B1 and in col. 5, line 8 to col. 6, line 2 and col. 7, lines 37-51; a method of placing a fastener (18) in a patient during surgery, where the method includes providing a fastener with formable portion and a base (33, 36, or bottom of the U-shape) and a leg (16) extending from the base, the leg having a point on one end and an indeterminate length measured from the base; locating fastener inside a patient on one side of tissue (24), driving a pointed end of the fastener through tissue using one leg, moving the fastener into position; grasping the leg after the leg has penetrated tissue, tensioning the leg (by pulling) and moving the base of the fastener against the tissue; immobilizing the leg on the other side of tissue (other side of a wound), and cutting the fastener between the base and the pointed end to form a new end on the leg, engaging or grasping the end of the immobilized leg (with "instruments"); and bending the leg (i.e., allowing the leg to bend) to force the end (28) back towards the base of the fastener.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
 2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
 3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
 4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.
7. Claims 1, 27, 28, 74, and 75 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pyka et al. (5,002,563) in view of Conn (2,199,025). Pyka et al. disclose the invention substantially as claimed. Pyka et al. disclose, at least in figures 3-5B1 and in col. 5, line 8 to col. 6, line 2 and col. 7, lines 37-51; a fastener for use in surgery and a method, where the fastener and method include a body (18) having a base (33 or 36) and a leg (16) extending from the base; the body having a width dimension; the leg having a pointed end (at 14), an unformed length dimension from the base to the pointed end, the length that is long enough to extend out of a patient when the base is in an anchoring position within the patient's body, the leg configured to be cut to a formed length dimension measured between said base and the pointed end with the end located between the pointed end and the base such that the unformed length is greater than the formed length. However, Pyka et al. do not disclose a pledget on the body adjacent to the base or placing a pledget or prosthesis on the fastener adjacent to the base or tissue. Conn teaches, at least in figures 2-4 and col. 3, lines 21-34; the placement of a pledget or prosthesis (14 or 17) adjacent to the base of a fastener (i.e., a portion of suture adjacent to the patient's skin) and adjacent to tissue

15. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made, in view of Conn, to include a pledget or prosthesis with the fastener and method of Pyka et al. Such a pledget or prosthesis would not only protect tissue from trauma from the fastener body, it would allow absorption of secretions from a tissue wound and allow a means for delivery of therapeutic materials to the tissue.

8. Claims 5, 7, and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pyka et al. (5,002,563) in view of Levy (4,549,545). Pyka et al. disclose the invention substantially as claimed. Pyka discloses a wire fastener with a U-shaped body having a base (bottom of the U-shape) and two legs (16, 26), the body having a width dimension measured from one leg to the other, one leg having a pointed end (at 14) and a length dimension measured from the base to the pointed end that is long enough to extend out of a patient when the base is in an anchoring position from the patient's body. However, Pyka et al. do not disclose that the length dimension is greater than the width dimension by factors as claimed. Nevertheless, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to size a leg as claimed, since such a modification would have involved a mere change in the size of component. A change in size is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art.

Pyka et al. also do not disclose that another leg has a pointed end and a pledget adjacent the base. Levy teaches, at least in figure 1, a U-shaped fastener (14) with two pointed ends (12a, 12b) and a pledget (16) adjacent the base. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made, in view of Levy, to include another pointed end and a pledget in the fastener of Pyka et al.

Another pointed end would allow the convenient fastening of tissues from both ends of the fastener, while a pledget would protect tissues being fastened from trauma from the fastener body.

9. Claims 29-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pyka et al. (5,002,563). Pyka et al. disclose the invention substantially as claimed, but do not specifically disclose grasping of tissue prior to driving the pointed end through tissue, placing a plurality of fasteners, and organizing the fasteners. Nevertheless, Pyka et al. also disclose, in col. 9, lines 13-15, an example of a wound repaired by a plurality of "sutures 10." Thus, it would have obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to perform these steps. Grasping of tissue (manually or by "instruments" or by initial fasteners) would provide mechanical support to and positioning of soft tissues, so that a pointed end of a fastener may effectively penetrate tissue. The placing of a plurality of fasteners would allow the repair of a large wound or multiple wounds, while the organizing of fasteners would ensure that an adequate supply of fasteners is provided for a surgical procedure.

Response to Amendment

10. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 5, 7, 8, 21-31, 74, and 75 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. The rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, is hereby withdrawn, and the obviousness-type double patenting rejection is withdrawn in view of the abovementioned terminal disclaimer.

Conclusion

11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Julian W. Woo whose telephone number is (571) 272-4707. The examiner can normally be reached Mon.-Fri., 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM Eastern Time, alternate Fridays off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jackie Ho can be reached on (571) 272-4696. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/Julian W. Woo/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3773

November 27, 2008